

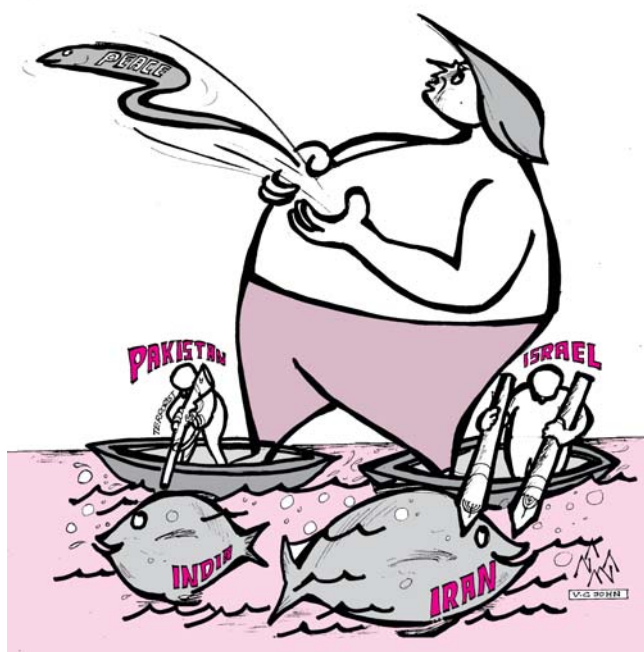
People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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CATCHING THE EEL

A False Claim!



TRUMP CLAIMS THAT SEVERAL CONFLICTS ACROSS THE WORLD HAVE COME TO A HALT BECAUSE OF HIS INTERVENTION, HOWEVER HE DID NOT GET ANY CREDIT



World Council of Churches

"Prophetic Witness for Life, Justice, and Peace" "Wake up!"

The World Council of Churches, in collaboration with the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa and the South African Council of Churches, organized a conference and seminars on "Prophetic Witness for Life, Justice, and Peace" in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 12 to 16 June, inspired by the centenary of the 1925 Life and Work Inaugural Conference, which emphasized the church's role in addressing social, political, and economic injustices.

"It is like the church has been sleeping, and now we have to say 'Wake up!'" said Rev. Malikopo Mohlatsane from the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa.

Acknowledging that justice issues are intersectional and interconnected and often share roots, seminars covered topics such as engaging the Kairos Document in a decolonial spirit, nutrition, mental health, freedom of religion, human rights, and many more.



Church leaders from across denominations and southern African countries gathered in the Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton, South Africa. Photo: Lyn van Rooyen/WCC

Confess Caste Identity and Keep the Faith: A Call to Victims of Caste Atrocities

R. Daniel Premkumer

Christ is not a foreign saviour imposed from above.
He is the Lord who walks among the oppressed,
who identifies with the crucified communities of our time.
By naming both our caste and our Christ,
we declare that our social identity is not a barrier to grace
but a testimony of it.
Christ does not erase our history. He redeems it.

A. The Universal Christ and the Dalit Struggle

In today's divided and pluralistic world, the Johannine affirmation—"I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30) invites us to rediscover the cosmic & global vision of Christ. This claim is especially relevant in India today, a land of many gods and many castes. For Christians, the Lordship of Christ is not just spiritual narrative; it

is a profound truth echoed in Paul's declaration: "All things—visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth are held together in Christ" (Col 1:16-17).

Yet over 200 million Dalits remain shackled by systemic injustice and are denied the freedom to fully embrace both their caste identity and Christian faith. Unlike Sikhs or Buddhists, Dalit Christians are excluded from Scheduled Caste protections and face discrimination first from society, then from the state and even within the church. The judicial and legislative systems have failed them. With growing religious intolerance and restrictions on Christian practices, and hope is dwindling.

Unless Dalit Christians reclaim their identity both social and spiritual their struggle risks becoming invisible. The upcoming caste Census forces an urgent question: Must Dalit Christians choose between their caste and their

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International Student Parliament
for Climate Justice:
A Prophetic Voice from the South

Bishop Nkosingithi Myaka, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, welcomed participants to the commemorative worship event at the church of Bishop Manas Buthelezi, a leader in contextual and Black theology, who argued that theology must address the lived realities of those who are oppressed.

In her homily, Dr. Thandi Gamedze noted that the Kairos Document described theology as "not one thing but a site of struggle," a "theology borne from lives hanging precariously on the precipice." She challenged the church to confront how "our Bible, our theology, our church have been complicit in violence." She reminded listeners that God is a God of justice, calling them to be present where youth face poverty, unemployment, and inequality—to live lives worthy of the sacrifice made in 1976".

— WCC News

People's Reporter

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Global Moral Order Crumbling?

Israel's unprovoked, reckless and illegal air-strikes against Iran on 13 June hitting its nuclear sites and military installations, and killing top officials and scientists have triggered a full-fledged war between the two countries. This has not only plunged West Asia into its greatest regional crisis since the 1973 Arab-Israeli war; but also raises the threat of a major world war. At the time of writing this piece on the 6th day of the fighting, retaliatory bombings in many cities and strategic centres in both countries have caused thousands of deaths and indescribable injuries to civilians, tragic destructions of infrastructures and influx of people from their homes in search of safe shelters.

If the escalation continues, more calamities are bound to occur in Iran and Israel in terms of deaths and destructions. The war has already caused rise in the price of oil across the world. This, along with disruptions of shipping, is bound to impose severe economic calamities everywhere. Although the President of the US said that he was not consulted by Benjamin Netanyahu, it is an open secret that Israel attacked Tehran with the consent of the former. Movements of US naval vessels and aircraft carriers to the waters of West Asia make the situation panicky. Iran's warning that all military bases of the US in the region would be attacked in the event of the US or her European allies supporting Israel. This raises fears about a major war in the region.

Apart from the calamities referred to above, this war raises other disturbing questions also: One is the declared reason for the war. Benjamin Netanyahu openly declared that he attacked Iran because, that country's nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes were "an existential threat to Israel. The US and the G-7 countries also support this approach. It is because of this approach the US has been pressurising Iran to abandon her nuclear programme. One nation or a group of powerful nations deciding which countries should and should not be allowed to produce nuclear weapons is an open insult to basic law and morality. This is the law of the jungle. A few nations imposing law of the jungle on other countries is an insult to civilisation. The indulgence in playing safe-game by the Muslim-Arab countries is another disturbing phenomenon. It is their lukewarm attitude that allowed Israel to continue its programme of genocide in Palestine since 1948. Now, it is after complete annexation of Palestine territories, Israel turns to eliminate Iran for her friendly relations to Palestinians. By playing a safe-game, the Arab states are not only burying their brotherly love to the Palestinians, but also surrendering their sovereignty and dignity. Economic interest, despite their immense wealth, is the reason behind this self-defeating approach.

Apart from the calamities, this war by raising threat to basic principles of international law and morality and the values and relevance of international institutions and conventions, is aimed at putting an end to civilisation. This situation calls for not only an end to the war, but also the imperative of reframing international laws, institutions and conventions to ensure rule of law, right to life of the people and national sovereignty.

Thought for the Fortnight

"Unless the world adopts nonviolence it will spell certain suicide for mankind."

— Mahatma Gandhi

A Global Vision For the Church

M. J. Joseph

The cosmic vision of Christ is for the unity and integrity of all creation.
This cosmic vision is part of the salvation of our time
because God's saving purpose is not limited to the church.
We believe that the church is the nucleus of the first fruits, the sign and instrument of
God's purpose to unite all things in Christ. In the household of God - the *cosmos* (the world) vision
is to be promoted for the glory of God. The unity of the church is significant in this context.

(Third and concluding part of
the paper
'A Global Vision
For the Church'
published in the last issue)

Emerging Ecumenical Challenges

There is increasing despiritualization of values championed by the Market Systems which call forth a Christian response. To impart spiritual consciousness is an ecumenical task. Trends of change are noticed globally in the economic, social and political scenes.

The problem of the marginalization of the poor, violation of human rights, suppression of democratic rights, rise of religious fundamentalism (in the name of safeguarding the purity of religion), the talk about the clash of civilizations, eulogizing violence on false interpretation of religious texts, total disregard of the rights of the indigenous people, unconcerned response to the cry of the migrant people, devaluation of the status of women, dalits, tribals, adivasis, aboriginals etc. are emerging issues in the world, which require a response. "A voice crying in the wilderness" is able to create ripples in the vast sea of life. "As Christian faith is a resistance movement against fatalism," the meaning of the cross alone makes the community truly local. What we have noted earlier could be summed up in the following way.

Level 1: Classical ecumenism relating to the polity of the church. It speaks of the cosmic vision of Christ for unity and integrity of all creation. This cosmic vision is part of the salvation of our time because God's saving purpose is not limited to the church. We believe that the church is the nucleus of the first fruits, the sign and instrument of God's purpose to unite all things in Christ. In the household of God - the *cosmos* (the world) vision is to be promoted for the glory of God. The unity of the church is significant in this context.



The Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph is former Professor of New Testament and Principal, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam, Principal, ISET, ECC and Director Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, Secretary BTESSC, West Bengal; Member Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, Geneva.

Level 2: Contemporary ecumenism which has 2 component elements. (i) Inter-religious ecumenism: A theological understanding of the people of other faiths is the need of the hour. A paradigm shift in mission is required. The challenge is to discover new patterns of inter-relatedness. The very concept of inter-relatedness seeks the path of peace and harmony as all the people are to be considered as "the birds of the same nest." In seeking a New way of being the Church, we need not have to speak more of the boundaries that separate us. The imagery of a river flowing may make better sense. A river that flows assimilates and absorbs everything with a high sense of comprehension. If this is done, "following Jesus" becomes a possibility for all. In such an attitude, "streams of awareness" emerge from the depth of togetherness. New life in Christ makes life qualitatively different for all if the Church beckons others to join the pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God which we call "the New Heaven and the New Earth".

ii) Ecological Ecumenism

Ecological concerns are basic issues of all people. To protect our common home-Earth-we must mobilize the spiritual resources of all religions.

A move from an anthropocentric to a bio-centric attitude to life is indeed a matter for our corporate survival. In such an attitude, the Sun will be our mentor, the breeze will be our invigorator, the flower will be the beauty of our hearts and the dove will be our quest for peace. The flora and fauna challenge us for a graceful movement from consolidation to comprehension. To discover, to appreciate and to promote rich diversity in the order of creation takes us to the divine. A concern for ecological ecumenism leads us to uphold spiritual values such as gratitude, praise, humility, sufficiency and justice for living sustainably in the 21st C. Mathew Fox's phrase, "creational spirituality" speaks of an alternative vision in which there is the recognition of deep awareness of God's gifts and presence in creation. The ecological exhortation of the Seers of Old is indeed worth emulating: To quote, "We are the birds of the same nest. We may wear different skins, We may speak in different tongues, we may belong to different cultures, yet we share the same home- our Earth. Born on the same planet, Covered by the same skies, Gazing at the same stars, Breathing the same air, We must learn to happily progress together. Or miserably perish together. For human being can only live individually, but can only survive collectively.

Conclusion

In the present mission context of the Church, one should entertain a tremendous sense of accommodation, flexibility and sensitivity to maintain the credibility of the gospel. Standing "under the law of Christ," she should live with love, power and self-discipline, beckoning others in that great pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God. Let the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it and it's gates shall never be shutBut nothing unclean shall enter it... (Rev. 21:24-27). ●

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Radicalising Reformation

An International, Ecclesiastical-Theological, Project Group

"Democracy at Risk" Responding to today's threats to our democracy

(Second part
of the Statement
"Democracy at Risk"
published in the last issue)

3.

*I will make of you a great
nation, and I will bless you,
and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless*

*you,
and the one who curses you
I will curse;*

*and in you all the families of
the earth shall be blessed.
(Genesis 12:1 -3 NRSV)*

● We affirm

the ancient covenant of God with Abraham and its meaning for all the families of the earth. We acknowledge the special role played in the conveyance of this blessing by the families of the children of Abraham, namely Judaism, Islam and Christianity. **We acknowledge that the promise of the land was never meant to be unconditional or to be understood as a privilege. Rather the promise of the land carries with it a covenant responsibility to ensure that it can be a blessing for all the nations.**

● We confess

that our Lutheran tradition contains elements that have been unjustly demeaning of, and harmful to, the Jewish people. Martin Luther has made statements and written tracts against Judaism that are repugnant and have caused great harm. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has rightly distanced its member churches from these statements.

● We confess

some among us who claim to follow Christ have made derogatory statements against both Jews and Muslims, fueling the fires of antisemitism and Islamophobia. The ideology of Christian Zionism, in particular, is a heresy, a false narrative that distorts Jewish, Muslim and Christian teachings. In seeking to hasten the coming of Armageddon by destroying Islam's third most holy site, the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City, and to replace it by building the Third Temple, Christian Zionism is creating fear and causing violence throughout the Holy Land. By transforming the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a religious conflict, Christian Zionism is distorting all three Abrahamic faith traditions while

We acknowledge
that the promise of the land was never meant
to be unconditional or to be understood as a privilege.
Rather the promise of the land carries with it
a covenant responsibility to ensure
that it can be a blessing for *all* the nations.

creating widespread hostility and alienation.

● We confess

that we have been silent in the face of the harmful claims made by both Palestinian and Israeli extremists. Most destructive have been claims made by both Hamas (in the Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement) and by members of the Cabinet of the Government of Israel who claim a God-given exclusive right to the whole land, from the Nile to the Euphrates.

● We confess

that some among us have been silent in the face of the massacre by Hamas on October 7, 2023. **We absolutely condemn this massacre along with the abuse of civilians taken hostage. We have also been silent in the face of the retaliatory bombing of civilian population centers by the Government of Israel.** As statements by members of the Israeli cabinet have made clear, these relentless bombing that have killed and maimed tens of thousands, are not only directed against Hamas militants, but against large segments of the Palestinian community. This is nothing short of genocide. We

also confess that we have not done enough in response to the Nakba (the *Catastrophe*), the violent displacement and dispossession of Arab Palestinians that began in 1948. With much of the global community, we have stood by as illegal settlements have been built on Arab land, as the human and civil rights of Palestinians have been violated, and the suppression of Palestinian culture has been carried out by the State of Israel. We have been all too silent as the illegal Israeli Occupation denies Palestinians their civil, national and political rights.

● We are grateful

for the heritage of the Reformation and its clear bias in favor of the role of civil authority to maintain peace, justice and good order in society. At the same time we acknowledge the legitimacy of the Reformation's call for resistance by the citizenry (Martin Luther's treatise, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed*) when the ruling authority becomes cruel and unjust. Following the counsel of St. Peter and the Apostles ("We must obey God rather than any human authority." Acts 5:29), we support

the churches of the Holy Land and commend them for their commitment to non-violent resistance to decades of oppressive rule.

● We reject


The claims of Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists that God has given them the land unconditionally, from the Nile to the Euphrates. It is this claim that has undercut all peace negotiations and is presently making a two-state solution virtually impossible. We also reject the ideology of Christian Zionism, its unbiblical worldview, its misuse of scripture, as well as its present employment as a weapon against the Palestinian people. We reject claims by the Government of the United States that it has a claim to the ownership of Gaza and a right to develop it for its own purposes.

We commit ourselves

● **to advocate and promote** self-determination for the Palestinian people. We continue to believe that the two-states solution in which the State of Palestine will live side by side along the 1967 borders with the State of Israel is a realistic possibility. With security guarantees in place for both

We reject the ideology of Christian Zionism,
its unbiblical worldview, its misuse of scripture,
as well as its present employment as a weapon against the Palestinian people.
We reject claims
by the Government of the United States
that it has a claim to the ownership of Gaza
and a right to develop it for its own purposes.

WORDTOON



WORDTOON

Why
GO
and
BET
for a mere
GOBBET!

states, it will be possible to live together in peace, equality, justice and equity. **We commit ourselves to advocate for Jerusalem to be a shared capital for the three religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and for the two nations of Palestine and Israel. Thus, we support the comprehensive Arab League's Plan of March 4, 2025.**

● **to speak out** for the safe return of all hostages by Hamas and against the retaliatory destruction of the people and infrastructure of Gaza that is being carried out by the State of Israel. As long as the illegal Israeli Occupation continues, we call on the United States and other nations to cease to provide military armaments. We call on all parties to cease hostilities immediately and to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered to the beleaguered civilian community.

● **to speak out** against threats made by members of the Israeli Cabinet and their allies that call for the forced removal of the Palestinians of Gaza from their ancestral homeland.

● **to vigorously oppose** the claim of the United States to have a right to own, develop and exploit the territory of Gaza.

● **to empower the Palestinian Christians, though now only a small percentage of the population, to use their unique position as a balancing power to initiate dialogue and help broker a just peace. We also want to assure Palestinian Christians that we are grateful for the significant role they are playing in the ministries of health, education and reconciliation; critical functions that benefit all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religious and political affiliation.**

To be continued

In the next issue

4. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

5. For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
(I Peter 4:17 NRSV)

A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann, the Legendary Theologian of Our Time

An Unsettling Prophet of Imagination and His Passion for the Word and the World

Ansan Thomas

For some, the Bible is merely a historical text filled with ancient stories. For others, it serves as a guide for personal devotion. Yet for many, it is a prophetic voice that speaks directly into the realities of life. Walter Brueggemann saw the Bible as something much bigger. He viewed the word as a

powerful tool to analyse the present world with the prophetic imaginations as perceived by the scripture. As an ardent reader of his writings and one deeply inspired by his prophetic insights, it is my privilege to pen down this humble, small tribute to this legendary but genuine human being, who stood for his unwavering faith in the Biblical God and his passion for the created world.

Who is Brueggemann?

Walter Albert Brueggemann was born in Tilden, Nebraska, USA on March 11, 1933. He was the son of August Brueggemann, a pastor of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Like his father, he was rooted in the evangelical tradition of German Pietism that continued to be his theological habitat. He graduated from Elmhurst College, and secured a Doctorate in Theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He later earned a Doctorate in Philosophy from St. Louis University. He was the faculty of both Eden Theological Seminary (1961-1986) and Columbia Theological Seminary from 1986 to 2003.

Writings as Daring, Disturbing and De-Colonising the Mind

Walter Brueggemann is one of the most influential Bible interpreters of our time. He is the author of one hundred and sixty eight books and numerous scholarly articles. He has been a highly sought-after speaker.

Brueggemann disturbed the Biblical scholarships by his daring but provoking interpretations of the text in the unfolding global scenarios. For him, "the Gospel is a very dangerous idea. **There is nothing safe about the Gospel. Jesus did not get crucified because he was a nice man.**" The task of prophetic ministry is "to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the dominant culture around us".

A Legendary Biblical Scholar

The twentieth century has produced many celebrated theologians and biblical scholars—Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, Rudolf Bultmann, Gustavo Gutierrez, James H. Cone, Rosemary Radford Ruether, C. S. Song, M. M. Thomas, to name a few. Among them, Brueggemann stands as a towering figure whose work uniquely bridged biblical imagination and contemporary global issues. His writings are not just

scholarly; they are prophetic. For him, Scripture could be both historically situated and spiritually alive.

Notable examples include 'Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty' and 'Chosen?: Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict'. These works represent bold and timely Christian responses to the pressing crises of our age.

Bruggerman had a profound impact on biblical studies, influencing generations of scholars and students.

His legacy lies in his ability to connect the ancient texts of the Bible to the realities of the present world. His sharp and focused writings urge us prompting critical reflection and inspiring social action. As Bruggerman said, people may be "narcotized" by a "civic religion" and that it is the task of pastors, biblical Scholars and other leaders to help people recognize the "demanding, dangerous dimensions" of scripture. His voice reminds us that true faith must not shy away from the hard truths of our world but must speak prophetically and act justly.

the fray but rather as entangled in history, astonishingly transformative, and impinged upon by the voices of the suffering. Bruggerman views God as a relational, dialogic, and dynamic partner who actively engages with his people. For him, God is not a static or absolute entity, but rather a "lively character" who is a real and is actively involved in the world and in our lives.

Six Decades of Prophetic Voice as Classical Theological Works

From the time of his earlier classic book, "The Prophetic Imagination" written in 1978 to his last written work (168th book) at the age of 92 in the year 2025, "Lament that Generates Covenant", he has demonstrated his intellectual honesty, unwavering commitment and passion to the Biblical faith. One of his newest books "Old Words for a New World" (2025) is his invitation to relook the Bible from the perspective of our new world marked by untold miseries and hardships. Each of his 168 books has become the theological classics of our time.

Prophet of Social Justice

Brueggemann painted the prophetic task not as angry denunciation or mere moral exhortation, but as the deeply pastoral, deeply disruptive calling **to nurture grief and kindle hope.** He showed that prophets break the silence not to shout down the empire, but to sing out another world

Brueggemann had constantly highlighted the vision for a just and equitable society in all his writings. In "The Prophetic Imagination", he challenges the Church to play its role as social critics and as an advocate for the marginalized in an unjust world. He engaged with the social and political realities of ancient Israel, and it has been applied to contemporary world realities which prompts our critical reflection on issues of power, oppression, and social responsibility.

Call for Environmental Justice:

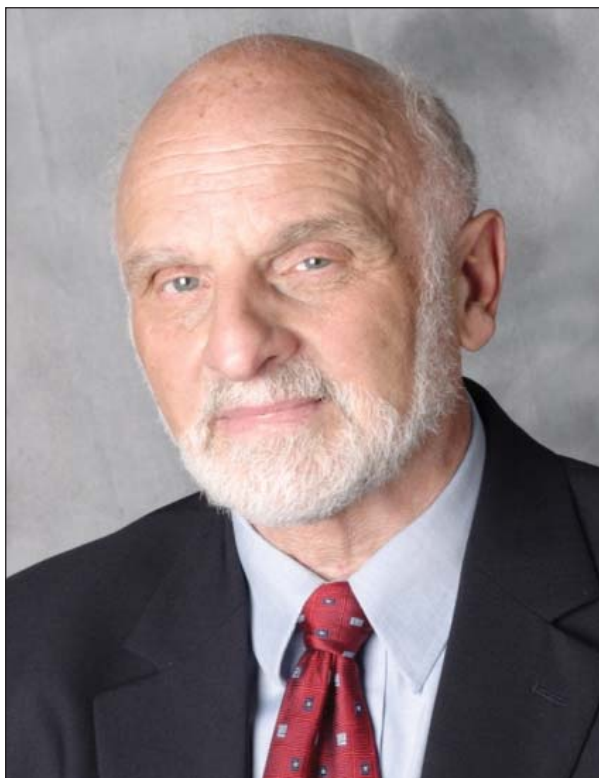
Brueggemann uses the concept of prophetic imagination to encourage people to reframe their understanding of environmental realities and engage in transformative action.

It is not accidental that he passed away on an environment day in the year 2025, but is a divine destiny to carry on the prophetic legacy of his inter connectedness, where the entire world is a neighborhood.

Responsibility and Challenge

Bruggerman had a profound impact on biblical studies, influencing generations of scholars and students. His legacy lies in his ability to connect the ancient texts of the Bible to the realities of the present world. His sharp and focused writings urges us

prompting critical reflection and inspiring social action. As Bruggerman said, people may be "narcotized" by a "civic religion" and that it is the task of pastors, biblical Scholars and other leaders to help people recognize the "demanding, dangerous dimensions" of scripture. His voice reminds us that true faith must not shy away from the hard truths of our world but must speak prophetically and act justly.



Walter Brueggemann



Rev. Ansan Thomas serves as the Vicar, Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Ambalakkara. He has authored four books

God of History in 'Suffering'

Biblical faith never experiences God as entirely above

WORDTOON



MY GREAT FRIEND
can never
MIGRATE
through the
FRONT!

WORDTOON

Confess Caste Identity and Keep the Faith: A Call to Victims of Caste Atrocities

>>> *Contd. from Page 1 Col. 1*
Christ? Or can they boldly embrace both?

B. Caste and the Indian Census:

Despite common assumptions, there is no legal ban on Christians reporting caste in the census. Historically:

- 1881–1931: British censuses recorded caste across religions—including Christians acknowledging caste's persistence post-conversion.

- Post-1951: Independent India limited caste data collection to SCs/STs (and later OBCs in select surveys). However, full caste hierarchy data was no longer gathered nationally.

- 1950 Presidential Order: This restricted SC status to Hindus (later extended to Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990), excluding Dalit Christians and Muslims from SC benefits but not from being identified by caste.

- In 2011, A broader caste census was done but caste-wise data was not released, citing data quality concerns.

Current Reality:

Census 2027 has the potential to rectify this invisibility. Christians can legally report their caste, but are still denied SC status an injustice rooted in religion-based discrimination.

C. Congregational Silence and Spiritual Misguidance

Many churches teach that caste has no place in Christianity. While this is theologically sound, it is often used to silence Dalit identity.

Dalits are made to feel that: Naming their caste is "unspiritual"; Christ erases, rather than redeems, their history; They must hide their background for acceptance. Meanwhile, upper-caste Christians proudly flaunt their heritage, maintaining subtle dominance.

"I am Dalit, and Christ Is My Ishtadaivam" (Christ is God of My Clan)

In the Bible, the Twelve Tribes of Israel define the national and spiritual identity of the Covenant people. Similarly, in India, caste defines socio-political existence. **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of "Annihilation of Caste" parallels Paul's radical message: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).** Yet caste, race, and gender divisions persist often reinforced by religious

New Age Faith Testament of Dalits is a call:

- To see Christ not as alien but as one of us.
- To own caste not as a curse but as a context for redemption.
- To re-write history from the margins.
- To build the kingdom of God not in theory, but in solidarity.

● When Caste Census comes calling to be bold and enter your caste without an iota of guilt, for the Country you love, should feel the shame and put down her head for inflicting never ending Atrocities on Dalits and Dalit Christians and say your religion is your caste.

● When Christian Preachers tell you 'You are abandoning your faith, tell them that our Christ we worship suffers injustice with us'

institutions themselves.

It is time for Dalit Christians to speak boldly:

"Yes, I am Dalit, and my Ishtadaivam is Christ."

This is not a denial of faith but an affirmation of it. Christ is not a foreign saviour imposed from above. He is the Lord who walks among the oppressed, who identifies with the crucified communities of our time. By naming both our caste and our Christ, we declare that our social identity is not a barrier to grace but a testimony of it. **Christ does not erase our history. He redeems it.**

Dalit Christians: Faithful but Forgotten

Dalit Christians form a significant portion of India's Christian population, yet remain marginalized by both State and Church. They face:

- Denial of SC status due to their faith
- Discrimination within church, where dominant-caste Christians hold power
- Erasure of caste identity in official statistics and theological narratives
- Double discrimination: first as Dalits, then as Christians in a majoritarian society
- The 1950 Presidential Order remains a cruel barrier, denying Dalit Christians access to affirmative action, scholarships, legal safeguards, and dignity.

D. From Untouchability to Holy Identity

Three decades ago, we fought aggressively against



Bishop Dr. R. Daniel Premkumar, Anglican Union – India, Ruvuuma Diocese, Tanzania Emissary Bishop to Minister Congregations and Pastors who have No One to Turn to.

untouchability, discrimination, and the infamous two-class system. **Back then, we knew only the outlines of the Gospel. Today, we have seen its depths: Christ stands with the Dalits, not Limited to Sanctum Sanctorum.**

Now is the time to purge the spiritual pollution wrongly attached to Dalit Castes. In Christ, Dalits' dignity is restored not by erasing who we are, but by reclaiming it. The day is coming when the caste veil will lift, and the world will recognize saints among Dalit people, holy men and women whose worth was long hidden by the false theology of Caste.

When we see ourselves through Christ's eyes, history itself will be re-written—not just from the dominant, but from the perspective of those on the margin. **Only New Age Dalit**

Now is the time to purge the spiritual pollution wrongly attached to Dalit Castes. In Christ, Dalits dignity is restored not by erasing who we are, but by reclaiming it. The day is coming when the caste veil will lift, and the world will recognize saints among Dalit people, holy men and women whose worth was long hidden by the false theology of Caste.

Christians can build a future where faith, justice, and solidarity unite crossing the boundaries of religion and caste to bring Christ's reign on earth.

E. CALL TO ACTION

1. Reclaim Identity: "I Am Dalit, and Christ Is My Ishtadaivam (Christ is God of our Clan)" Caste is not a contradiction to Christian faith—it is the context from which Christ lifts people. Just as God named Israel's tribes, Dalit Christians too can name their caste: **"Yes, I am Dalit. And Jesus Christ is my God."** This is not a shame! It is truth telling. It is a declaration that grace of God restores, not erases.

2. Seize the Census: Let Truth Be Counted

Dalit Christians must:

- Enter their caste without guilt or fear in the upcoming census.
- Say you are Mala/Madiga and Caste is your religion.
- Reject the lie that conversion erased caste oppression
- Demand revision of the 1950 Presidential Order, which excludes them unjustly
- Insist that caste be recorded regardless of religion
- Expose Church and State to the uncomfortable reality of caste among Christians

Census data can:

- Provide evidence for policy change
- Strengthen legal efforts to gain SC status
- Empower Dalit Christian movements

- Hold the Church accountable for internal inequality

3. Rethink Spirituality: From Untouchability to Holy Identity

Dalit Christians have fought hard against untouchability, discrimination.

- Now is the time to reject false humility that demands silence.

- Claim caste with dignity, not shame

- Assert the right to be seen, counted, and treated with equal respect

- Invite the Church into a moment of self-purification and renewal

F. Embrace the Path

Forward: Caste-Owned, Christ-Centered

Let Dalit Christians boldly live as both Witnesses to the gospel, and Survivors of a long history of oppression, to be Dalit and Christian is not a contradiction but a call to prophetic leadership just as a Levite never abandons his tribe for example, and a Kuki Zho or Gond Adivasi takes pride in their roots, Dalit Christians must stop disowning their caste identity. It is not shameful; it is a historical truth. To be both Dalit and Christian is not a contradiction but a dynamic calling. We have been misled to believe that hiding our caste is spiritual humility. Meanwhile, upper-caste Christians can flash around their heritage with pride.

Call: New Age Faith Testament of Dalits is a call:

- To see Christ not as alien but as one of us.

- To own caste not as a curse but as context for redemption.

- To re-write history from the margins.

- To build the kingdom of God not in theory, but in solidarity.

- When Caste Census comes calling to be bold and enter your caste without an iota of guilt, for the Country you love should feel the shame and put down her head for inflicting never ending Atrocities on Dalits and Dalit Christians and say your religion is your caste.

- When Christian Preachers tell you 'You are abandoning your faith, tell them that our Christ we worship suffers injustice with us'.

The Gospel at the Bottom of the Pyramid

Arun Sam Amirtham

Introduction

The concept of the “Bottom of the Pyramid” (BOP) was introduced to the business world by management scholars C.K. Prahalad and Stuart L. Hart in their groundbreaking 2002 article “The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid.” They defined this demographic as the approximately 4-5 billion people living on less than \$2 per day, challenging multinational corporations to view this population not as a burden but as an untapped market opportunity and potential source of innovation.

According to the World Bank's most recent global poverty estimates, approximately 9.2% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty (less than \$1.90 per day), representing about 700 million people. In the Indian context, despite significant economic growth, about 22.5% of the population still lives below the poverty line, with rural poverty rates significantly higher than urban areas. This economic disparity is further compounded by the intersecting factors of caste, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location, creating complex realities of marginalisation that demand multi-pronged theological responses.

While the framework of Prahalad and Hart, was primarily economic, it raises profound theological questions: How does the Gospel - the “good news” proclaimed by Jesus Christ - speak to those at the economic margins of society? What does it mean to proclaim a message of hope, dignity, and salvation to those who struggle daily for physical survival? How might ecclesial structures themselves need transformation to authentically embody good news for the poor? **This article explores the intersection of the BOP concept with Christian theology, examining how the church has responded to marginalised communities and drawing insights from biblical narratives, liberation theology, and Dalit theological perspectives.**

The Gospel narratives consistently portray Jesus engaging with those at the social, religious, and economic margins of his society. One powerful example is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42), where he crosses multiple boundaries:

1. Gender barriers, 2. Ethnic divisions,
3. Religious differences, 4. Moral judgments,
5. Economic disparity

Market Responses to the BOP Concept

Since Prahalad and Hart's initial proposition, numerous businesses have developed strategies to serve BOP markets. These innovations include:

1. Sachet packaging: Single-use sachets of shampoo, detergent, and food products that make daily necessities affordable through smaller quantities.
2. Microfinance initiatives: Beginning with the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, microfinance has expanded globally, providing small loans to entrepreneurs without traditional collateral.
3. Mobile banking solutions: M-Pesa in Kenya and similar platforms have revolutionised financial access for unbanked populations.
4. Low-cost healthcare: Initiatives like Aravind Eye Care in India, provide high-quality medical services at drastically reduced prices through innovative business models.
5. Inclusive business models: Companies like Jaipur Rugs that integrate BOP communities into value chains as producers rather than just consumers, creating sustainable livelihoods.

While these market-based solutions have demonstrated some success, critics argue that purely profit-motivated approaches may inadvertently exploit rather than empower BOP communities. The market alone cannot address the structural injustices that perpetuate poverty, and many innovations remain inaccessible to the poorest of the poor. Moreover, market-based solutions often fail to account for the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of human flourishing that extend beyond material provisioning.



Mr. Arun Sam Amirtham is an entrepreneur committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in promoting renewable energy, water and affordable housing technologies through South-South partnerships. He is also interested in issues at the intersection of technology, politics, ethics, church and society. He shares his time between Switzerland and India.

The Church's Response to BOP

The Christian church has a long history of engagement with economically marginalised communities, from the early Christian communities that practised economic sharing to medieval monastic orders that served the poor, to modern missionary movements that combined evangelism with education and healthcare. However, contemporary church approaches to BOP communities often reveal significant gaps:

1. Charity without empowerment: Many church initiatives remain locked in models of dependency-creating charity rather than community empowerment.
2. Middle-class orientation: Church structures, worship styles, and theological education often reflect middle-class values and concerns, creating barriers for

BOP participation.

3. Prosperity theology distortions: In some contexts, prosperity gospel teachings have created harmful narratives that blame the poor for their lack of faith or spiritual deficiency.

4. Insufficient systemic analysis: Many churches address symptoms of poverty through relief efforts without engaging the structural causes of economic marginalisation.

5. Cultural imperialism: Evangelistic approaches sometimes impose Western or upper-caste cultural expressions alongside the Gospel, inadvertently undermining indigenous cultural resources for theological reflection.

Despite these challenges, innovative church models have emerged that effectively contextualise the Gospel for BOP communities — through incarnational ministry, asset-based community development approaches, indigenous theological reflection that speaks to local economic realities, and prophetic engagement with systems of power and privilege.

Biblical Foundations: Jesus and the Marginalized

The Gospel narratives consistently portray Jesus engaging with those at the social, religious, and economic margins of his society. One powerful example is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42), where he crosses multiple boundaries:

1. **Gender barriers:** Men rarely spoke with unaccompanied women in public.
2. **Ethnic divisions:** Jews had “no dealings with Samaritans” (John 4:9).
3. **Religious differences:** Samaritans and Jews worshipped differently.
4. **Moral judgments:** The

woman's marital history marked her as an outcast.

5. **Economic disparity:** The woman's daily water-gathering suggests her position among the working poor.

Yet Jesus engages her with dignity, offers her “living water,” and ultimately reveals his messianic identity to her—making her among the first evangelists in scripture.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus consistently elevates those considered marginal:

↳ The Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10:25-37) makes an ethnic and religious outsider the moral exemplar.

↳ The Lost Sheep parable (Luke 15:1-7) demonstrates the shepherd's disproportionate concern for the one that wandered.

↳ The Prodigal Son narrative (Luke 15:11-32) illustrates extravagant welcome for the dishonoured and destitute.

↳ Jesus' table fellowship with “tax collectors and sinners” (Mark 2:15-17) demonstrates radical inclusion that scandalised religious authorities.

↳ The healing of the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34) affirms the dignity of one who was economically depleted and ritually unclean.

The early church continued this counter-cultural economic practice, with the Jerusalem community sharing possessions so that “there was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:34). The biblical witness suggests that economic sharing and dignity for the marginalised are not peripheral but central to the Gospel message — a reality that challenges contemporary tendencies to spiritualise the Gospel while neglecting its material implications.

To be continued

In the next issue

Liberation Theology's Perspective
Dalit Theological Responses

International Student Parliament for Climate Justice

A Prophetic Voice from the South

>>> **Contd. from Page 8 Col. 5 imbalance.**

Symbolic Representation with Global Significance

The students **symbolically represented 17 regions** selected for their extreme vulnerability to climate change: Sundarbans, Tuvalu, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Dominica, the Amazon, California, Canada, Iraq, Mali, Kenya, Greenland, Alaska, Greece, Mozambique, Australia, and Kerala. They also enacted symbolic diplomatic roles, with

“Ambassadors” representing India, the USA, and Bhutan offering insights on international climate justice.

Though rooted in a local context, the students' presentations reflected **real-world ecological challenges**, resonating with global movements for environmental justice and climate equity.

The Parliament drew support from distinguished leaders and educators, including:

- Rt. Rev. Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian, Bishop, CSI

Madhya Kerala Diocese

- Mr. Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Member of the Legislative Assembly
- Justice K.T. Thomas, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India
- Mr. Suresh Kurup, Former Member of Parliament
- Dr. Ruble Raj, Former Principal, Marian College, Kuttikkanam
- Prof. Dr. Anju Susan George, Principal, CMS College
- Prof. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackadu, Director of

Ecological Concerns, CSI Synod; Commissioner for Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, World Council of Churches.

The Parliament was coordinated by Master Trainer Mr. Ashok Alex Luke of CMS College, with support from Rev. Anil Thomas, Dr. Nisha Ann Jacob, Mr. Sudeep Cherian, and Mr. Asquith Oommen Alex.

A Wake-Up Call from the Youth

In their concluding declaration, the students boldly stated:

“This is not a simulation. It is a wake-up call. We,

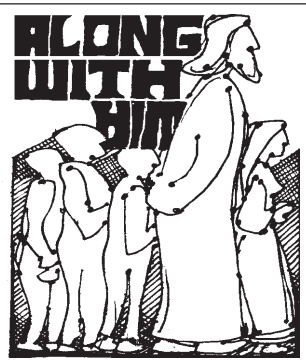
the children of the Global South, may not have caused this crisis, but we are living through its consequences. We call on the world to stop negotiating endlessly and start acting immediately.”

By **symbolically voicing** the struggles of climate-impacted communities worldwide, these students have contributed a profoundly moral and imaginative act of advocacy—one that bridges local action with global significance.

Reported by

Mathew Koshy Punnackadu

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Mammen Varkey

"Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at the table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation....." So when the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it."
Mark 16:14-20 (RSV).

Even though the eleven chosen disciples of that time were, and so certainly the disciples and followers of the Risen Lord of all the time are, entrusted with the responsibility to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15), many a time, the followers of, and believers in, the Risen Lord are, very sadly, concerned with their own people, their own territories – the 'territories of Israel'! We are commanded to

leave and go beyond our own 'territories', not only geographically, but also in our vision, in our faith and in our concerns. Socially, culturally etc. too. We have to transcend the confines of our faith-realm.

The word of the cross is 'folly'!

This 'going beyond' our immediate territories, must be along the way of Cross. Not along the way we like, or as per our convenience. This is often, completely forgotten. Definitely,

the achievements of the modern Missionary movements are unparalleled. But, when we study, we will see that many of, may be, most of, the modern missionary movements' 'goings', 'journeys' and 'endeavours' were with the backing of the 'crown'. They had the political support. Perhaps, more problematic may be, the backing they have had, of money. It does affect the nature of 'the preaching of the gospel to the whole creation'. But the Risen Lord sent them out along the way of the Cross. This sending out by the One who had received "all authority in heaven and on earth", Matt. 28: 18, may be foolish in the way of thinking of the world. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us, who are being saved, it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1: 18.

No triumphalism

Of course, the way of the cross is not at all easy and comfortable. Paul says, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not

destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." 2 Corinthians 4: 8-10. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1: 21. Here, we find no triumphalism at all, in a worldly sense. What we hear from the podiums, these days, is the roar of success, triumph.

Language and methodology in our 'going'

Today too, the Risen Lord sends us out along the way of the Cross. Jesus said, "I am the way". The 'way' has not changed. Unfortunately, what we see around are many 'missionary enterprises' moulded and conducted in the worldly fashion, as business empires are built up. They use the language and methodology of political and business empires. What we see in them is the total rejection of the Cross. And total discarding of the Spirituality of the Cross. The Cross is almost completely forgotten.

Quite long, complex and profound encounters

The Risen Lord must have

had quite long, deep and intimate interaction with the eleven and the other followers. When we read the seven verses from 14 to 20 (Mark Chapter 16) we may tend to think that the Risen Lord's meeting, 'upbraiding' (TEV), and 'commissioning' all took just a few minutes, a short time! But the interactions, encounters and fellowships of the Risen Lord with them must have been quite long, complex and profound. We read in The Acts of the Apostles, "To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the Kingdom of God." Acts 1: 3.

It must not have been easy for the eleven disciples and the followers of Jesus to take a decision and to start journeying along the way of the Cross. Though they had earlier fled from the Cross, after the encounter with the Risen Lord for forty days, they did journey along the way of the Cross.

To be continued

LAMP UNTO THE FEET, LIGHT UNTO THE PATH

Run The Race Fully Well

A. V. Itty

2 Tim. 4:1-8

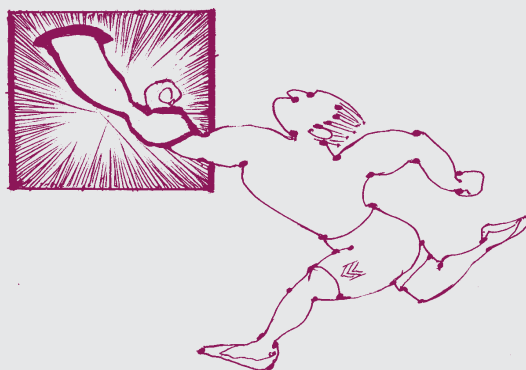
"I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day." (vs. 7,8).

The athletes who run on the track have not come there inadvertently. They reached there as a result of long training and continuous hard work. They must have paid a great price and sacrificed a lot for that. Their ultimate aim is their victory in the race. No one enters the track with a desire to fail. If one is to be victorious, one has to follow diligently all the rules of the track. If he/she breaks a single rule, he/she will not be victorious, even if he/she comes first.

All these things apply to those who are in the spiritual track too. Only those who follow all the rules will be able to complete the race successfully.

Those who have not taken the race seriously and those who have been unwilling to follow the rules diligently, have faltered in the race: history gives ample examples for this. It is also part of history that some people who had done splendid performances and won appreciation and applause of others at one stage, had to leave this world without finishing their race well.

We know many who were not interested in showing off



their talents and were considered by others as weaklings, who have completed the race well according to the will of God. Those who become victorious are not the ones who show off themselves and their agility, but the ones who have submitted themselves to the strict spiritual discipline and run the race fully well. Others



Prof. A. V. Itty, former Professor of English at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara, is, now, engaged in the Evangelical, and Educational Ministry undertaken by ADORE in the Rayagada Dist. of Odisha. 94950 17850 (Mob)

will have to leave the track ashamed and desperate of their wasted efforts. Let us try our best to run the race of faith before us with perfect discipline and win the crown.

Food For Thought:

A disciplined life is very essential to win a race. The spiritual race is also not different!

WORDTOON



'EYES' make SPOUSES SPICES in one's eyes

WORDTOON

Episcopal Consecration of Canon Dr. Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar



Bishop Raphael Haule, Principal Consecrator, Bishop, Ruvuma Diocese, Tanzania, and Bishop Dr. Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar, Anglican Union - India,

Rev. Dr. Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar has, by the grace of God, been consecrated as a Bishop of the Anglican Union, India, on the 31st of May 2025 in Oslo, Norway, under the auspices of the Nordic Catholic Church, which stands in faithful witness to the ecumenical call of Christ (Jn 17.22).

The consecration was a deeply solemn and sacred occasion, marked by the presence of eight ecclesial traditions, united in the spirit of Christian unity. The two principal consecrating bishops were from:

The Anglican Church in Tanzania (Ruvuma Diocese), and
The Melech Diocese of South Sudan.

They were joined and witnessed by:

A Bishop from the Anglican Church in the Cayman Islands,
A Bishop from the Anglican Union, Florida, and
Three bishops from the Nordic Catholic Church, alongside faithful laity and clergy from France, England and Germany.

The ceremony concluded with a joyful fellowship meal hosted at the residence of a retired Bishop who had served the Nordic Church faithfully for 25 years.

The following day was devoted to prayerful reflection on the urgent call of ecumenism, the coming together of all believers in faith as a Gospel imperative. In these challenging times, when the global Church faces increasing trials, we discern ecumenism not merely as a mission, but as an eschatological mandate a demand of our Lord in these latter days.

As Bishop of the Anglican Union, India and Emissary of the Ruvuma Diocese, Bp. Daniel Premkumar has been entrusted with the sacred responsibility to offer pastoral and episcopal care to the Anawim, the humble, the crushed, the overlooked congregations that often go unseen. His calling includes equipping and strengthening the dedicated pastors who shepherd these congregations of the margin, grounding them more deeply in the Word of God, the richness of Liturgy, and the wisdom of Social Sciences.

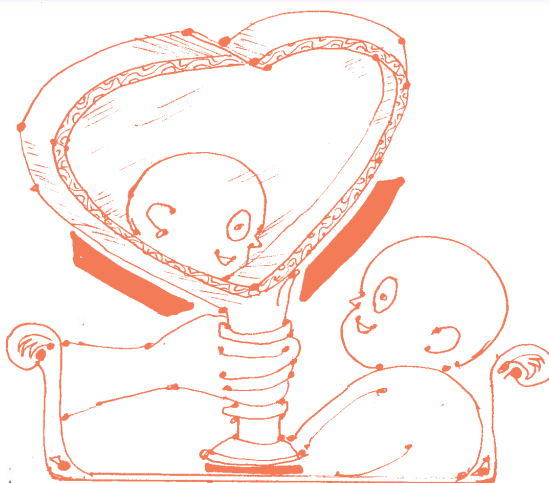
Bp Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar has recorded his deepest gratitude and thankfulness to God who made this impossible act as possible and also for the untiring efforts of Bishop Kevin Donlon, Provost, the Anglican Union, Tampa, California.

The People's Reporter family assures him of its prayers and offers him the best wishes of all its friends as Bp Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar takes up the sacred task, trusting in God's sustaining grace and in the fellowship of His Church.



L to R: Bishop Raphael Haule, Principal Consecrator, Bishop, Ruvuma Diocese, Tanzania, Bishop P. J. Lawrence, Bishop Emeritus, Cayman Islands, Bishop Peter John Abraham, Malek Diocese, South Sudan, Bishop Ottar, Nordic Catholic Church, Oslo, Norway, Bishop Dr. Rajanugraham Daniel Premkumar, Bishop Kevin Francis Donlon, Provost, Anglican Union, Tampa, Florida

CHEER CHAT



The pure heart
is a spotless Mirror
in which images
of infinite beauty
are reflected.

— Rumi

International Student Parliament for Climate Justice

A Prophetic Voice from the South

On June 6, 2025, the Great Hall of CMS College (Autonomous), Kottayam, became a moral assembly ground for the prophetic voices of young people from the Church of South India (CSI). The *International Student Parliament for Climate Justice*—jointly organized by the CSI Madhya Kerala Diocese's Department of Ecological Concerns and CMS College—offered a rare and symbolic platform where students represented the suffering of climate-vulnerable regions across the globe. Framed not as a mock exercise, but as a truth-telling space ahead of COP 30, the Parliament concluded with a powerful declaration:

"We are victims of a crisis we didn't create. We demand action—now."

The Parliament brought together school students of the CSI who symbolically represented some of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions—such as Tuvalu, the Sundarbans, Madagascar, the Amazon, California, Iraq, and others.

Through creative storytelling, dramatic presentations, and passionate speeches, the students



Participants and Leaders

conveyed the lived experiences of communities already facing the severe impacts of climate change—rising seas, forced displacement, deforestation, droughts, and ecosystem collapse. While the delegates were all from Kerala, India, they stood in solidarity with those affected across continents, raising a collective moral voice in anticipation of the upcoming COP 30 negotiations.

A Moral and Prophetic Platform

This Parliament was not a rehearsal or simulation. It was conceived as a truth-telling assembly rooted in ethical urgency. The resolution passed at the end of the session emphasized that the climate crisis is not only ecological or economic—it is profoundly spiritual and moral. It called for urgent global reflection and decisive action.

The students made the following key demands:

- A complete transition from fossil-fuel-based development to renewable alternatives.
- Immediate and just technology transfer to developing nations, especially in the Global South.
- Equitable energy access for poorer countries without further environmental degradation.
- Divestment from fossil fuels by churches and faith-based institutions.
- Strong support for UN-led climate negotiations and enforcement of emissions commitments.
- Protection of forests and

biodiversity, along with bans on exploitative forest tourism.

• Just and dignified rehabilitation of indigenous and forest-dwelling communities.

The students called for a new creation-centred ethic that recognises the intrinsic value of all life forms and rejects anthropocentric worldviews that contribute to ecological

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